

Press Release

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SOUTH AFRICAN
INSTITUTE OF
RACE RELATIONS

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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2 February 2012

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Less than a third of children attend Early Childhood Development centres

More than two thirds of all children between the ages of 0 and 4 do not attend Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, according to the latest *South Africa Survey*, published last week by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg.

ECD centres include day-care centres, crèches, playgroups, nursery schools, and pre-primary schools. As many as 68% of children aged between 0 and 4 do not attend one.

The province which had the highest proportion of children aged 0 to 4 years attending ECD centres in 2010 was Gauteng with 43%, followed by the Western Cape with 39%. The Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal registered the lowest attendance figures of children at ECD centres - 20% and 25% respectively.

Attendance figures also varied across race groups. Some 55% of white children attend an ECD centre, compared to 37% of Indian children, 31% of African children, and 27% of coloured children.

The Institute's analysis was based on data supplied by Statistics South Africa.

Mr Jonathan Snyman, a researcher at the Institute, described the fact that less than a third of children aged 0 to 4 in South Africa attend ECD centres as a cause for concern. 'Access to ECD centres is critically important to aiding a child's social and mental development and also helps them to prepare for foundation phase education,' said Mr Snyman. He added that, 'while the number of children attending an ECD centre has increased from 1 million in 2000 to 1.5 million in 2010, still only a minority (32%) attend ECD centres.'

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